CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies News

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From the Dean's Desk (December 1988)

Why are fellowships taxable?

Concordia, like all other universities, endeavours to attract excellent students and strives to provide for them an excellent education. At the graduate level, an essential feature of the attractiveness of the university is its capacity for providing the necessary financial fellowship support.

Many superior students come to the university with external grants in the form of postgraduate fellowships from N.S.E.R.C., S.S.H.R.C., F.C.A.R, and other granting agencies. By and large, these fellowships are awarded only to students with straight 'A' undergraduate records. This means that they have had to work hard over the years to win these fellowships in rigorous competitions. Nevertheless, the total amount of disposable income of these students is modest when compared to similar funds available to the best students south of the border. In fact, a good Canadian student may be better off to apply to an American university without a Canadian graduate fellowship and rely on financial support in the form of local teaching fellowships, since they are often paired with tuition waivers. As a result, a Canadian student may be better off financially by relinquishing a competitively awarded Canadian postgraduate fellowship in favour of an American teaching fellowship awarded on more subjective grounds.

This experience reinforces my impression that Canadian graduate fellowships do not meet their objective of providing the financial security required for academic success. All the more disturbing is the fact that fellowships are considered to be **taxable income** on the one hand and **unearned income** on the other. This means that students cannot even take advantage of existing tax-saving devices such as registered retirement savings plans to improve their financial position. At the level of postdoctoral fellowships the same laws apply. Consequently there are fields in which N.S.E.R.C., for example, cannot even give away their postdoctoral fellowships because there are no takers.

Now that the federal election is behind us and that our thoughts are focused on less spectacular topics such as the impending tax reform, it might be a good idea for all of our fellowship winners and their professors to write cogent letters to the Minister of Finance and request that **either** fellowships should be **nontaxable or** should be treated as **earned income**. I can think of no better Christmas present to our excellent students than speedy action in this matter.

Over the next few months, you will hear a great deal about initiatives by the Division of Graduate Studies to improve the financial opportunities for graduate students at Concordia. Although we have many ideas

for achieving this goal, we must rely on the imagination and ingenuity of the Concordia community for success. Please write to me with your suggestions. I will transmit them to the special task force on graduate fellowships to be established in January.

Have a happy holiday and a prosperous New Year.

M. E. Szabo

M. E. Szabo (Dean)

PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTATION — New Geography Stream

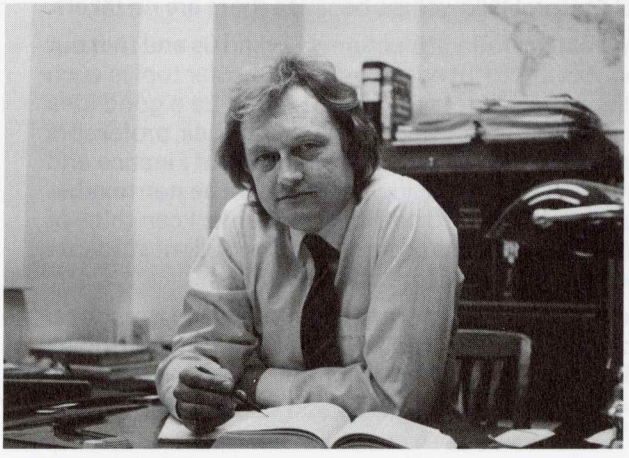
Until recently, the only Master's degree in Political Science at Concordia was the Public Policy and Public Administration program and the university offered no graduate studies at all in the Department of Geography. That will change when the university's Senate approves a new Political Science degree option this month.

The Geography thesis stream is a joint venture between the Political Science and Geography departments. The program grew out of efforts by the Geography department to institute a master's degree about four years ago. The Quebec Council of Universities has not yet given its approval to the proposal.

In the meantime, members of the Geography department have been negotiating with the Political Science faculty to create a unique program that would combine certain aspects of both departments.

The new program takes the Geography department closer to the area of public policy issues. Department chair, Max Barlow, explains that this is also one of the goals of the proposed master's degree.

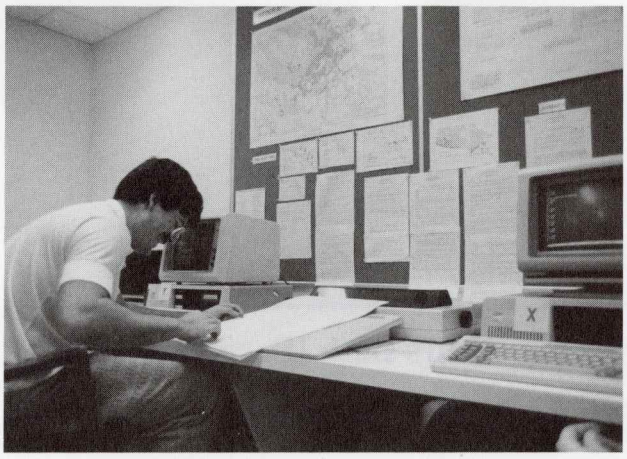
"The idea was to have a program which focussed on applying geography and geographical knowledge and analysis to public policy issues and questions: things like environmental issues and urban planning problems. A lot of these can be looked at from a geographical point of view. There was already an existing program in Political Science so it made sense to somehow bring the two closer together."



Chair of Geography Department, Max Barlow

The new Geography option may be just the first in a series of programs to grow out of the existing Master's in Public Policy and Public Administration. According to the program's director, Andrew Gollner, there are people in other departments who feel their disciplines overlap with Political Science to a certain extent. Gollner says in recent years there have been discussions on how different disciplines could be linked with Political Science. The Geography option is the first of these 'satellite' programs.

Students in the new option will follow a course of study focussed on Geography, but will still be required to take the basic Public Policy and Public Administration core courses. Among these courses is a research seminar which enables students to learn how to conduct policy-oriented research. Max Barlow explains this is important "because policy-oriented research has different demands and needs from purely academic or abstract research. In a sense, the research seminar is to help them on their way to writing proposals for their master's theses."



Student at work in Geography Dept's Reading Room

A whole range of courses on such topics as political economy, Quebec and Canadian public policy, national and provincial public administration are available to students beyond the required core curriculum.

Says Max Barlow, "there's quite a growing field within geography in impact assessment: devising techniques to measure public policy impacts on environmental phenomena, on human phenomena, and geographical patterns."

Not all the courses fall into traditional areas of geography or public policy study. "Geography of Attitudes and Values" examines how different and sometimes conflicting attitudes and values are an important part of public policy issues and the formulation of solutions to problems.

The program is designed with a practical bent as is the proposed master's degree. Barlow says the department saw a move towards the area of public policy as a way of providing a graduate degree that could lead to a career. He expects graduates will find work with government agencies or with consulting companies that deal with environmental or urban problems.

Eventually, about 10 people a year will be admitted to the program. The department doesn't expect that many in the first year, though, since the program cannot be advertised until it receives Senate approval in late 1988.

Candidates for the program should be qualified geographers, with an honours degree in Geography or its equivalent. Ideally, they should also have completed courses in Political Science as part of their undergraduate degree.

Profile — PETER BYRNE ART THERAPY

"Art therapy is a new field in Canada, and it's important to start with high standards. Concordia is starting with the highest we know of." Peter Byrne, acting director of Concordia's Art Therapy program, is referring to the university's status as the only Canadian institution recognized by the American Art Therapy Association. Canada's other art-therapy training centres aren't supervised by an outside body to ensure high standards.

Concordia's Art Therapy department, was created seven years ago. It has evolved from course to diploma to option within a master's in art education to, just last year, a master's in art therapy.

The school accepts an average of 10 students per year, and has three full-time and 10 part-time professors. Byrne relishes the working atmosphere of the program, stating that personal attention is the best way of training future art therapists. He would also like the program to retain its exclusivity, expanding by adding drama/dance/music therapy options rather than just enlarging the existing program.

"Especially with a limited market, we're better off having a smaller group of intensively-trained practitioners than simply making our classes bigger."

Byrne, who is British, says a Canadian location is an asset for an art therapy school.

"For me, one of the attractions of working here is the combination of American, British, and French theoretical inquiries into the nature of pathology and therapy."

There is no answer as to what exactly mental illness is, and Byrne says Canada has the advantage of being exposed to differing viewpoints without being locked into any one of them. This is augmented because the department's professors have different philosophical leanings.

Peter Byrne conferring with student in MA Program

He is especially troubled by pressures facing therapists, and art-therapy schools, in the United States, where health insurance companies require neat packages of therapies and cures. "They're getting bogged down in economic problems, and that may ultimately throw art therapy off its natural course."

Byrne is especially proud of the opportunity for students to take courses at other universities. This option has been exercised at the Allan Memorial Hospital, McGill, the Université de Québec à Montréal (UQAM), and through an exchange program in Italy.

Byrne's university education began in the 1960s in Liverpool, where he earned a Fine Arts degree and became interested in the artwork of the disturbed. After completing a degree in Art Education, he moved to London to work as an "art instructor" at a hospital of psychology in the days before art therapists existed.

After obtaining master's degrees in Art Therapy and Philosophy, Byrne began his doctorate but was interrupted when his supervisor Michael Edwards left to start up the art therapy department at Concordia. Byrne took over the Birmingham program, and then came here four years ago.

In addition to teaching and administrative duties at the school, Byrne paints, shows and sells his art, does research, carries on a private practice, and spends summers teaching at a therapeutic resort community in Greece.

"Because Art Therapy is such a small field, it's quite easy to network internationally," says Byrne. A member of the British Art Therapy Association for 18 years, he maintains contacts in France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Sweden and Greece.

Byrne says one of the fascinating elements of the program is the diversity of students. The mature students come from mostly professional backgrounds, such as teaching, nursing, psychology, philosophy, social work, and fine arts.

A unique component to Concordia's program is the requirement that students see a therapist who is not a member of the department's faculty. This provides an opportunity for students to see the process from the other side and to help them get in touch with their own feelings.

Art therapists need artistic ability, a talent to express their emotions, and a desire to work with troubled people, as well as a capacity to create their own market.

"We're all pioneers, for the next few years anyway," says Byrne. "But we're becoming more established."

UPCOMING DOCTORAL EXAMINATIONS

Ms. Geetha Ramanathan, Department of Computer Science on December 16, 1988 at 10:00 a.m. in H-929-23. Title: **A Functional Model for Specification and Analysis of Distributed Real-Time Systems: Formalism and Applications.**

Mr. Mohammad A. Abiri, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering on December 19, 1988 at 10:00 a.m. in H-773. Title: **A Novel Approach in Generation of Two-Variable Very Strict Hurwitz Polynomials and Applications in the Design of Stable Two-Dimensional Recursive Digital Filters.**

Mr. Duc Minh Tran, Department of Civil Engineering on January 10, 1988 at 2:30 p.m. in H-769. Title: **Junction Flow in Open Channels.**

All of the above exams will take place in the Hall Building, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.

Graduate Students!

Faculty Services is a group of technical consultants whose primary role is to assist faculty, researchers, and graduate students in their use of Computer Centre facilities. Much of the assistance we provide is in the form of individual consultation. In addition to one-on-one consulting, we also help to identify new requirements, and to recommend the introduction of new facilities or services that will aid researchers and graduate students at the university. As well, through bulletins and other forms of documentation, we introduce new or enhanced facilities, and provide the first level of "user assistance" with any technical problems. Unfortunately, because of the small size of the Faculty Services group, we are unable to become involved in any large scale programming or data analysis projects for researchers or graduate students; on the other hand, we can usually recommend qualified individuals who *can* do the work.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

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